



Gardens of Italy: The Italian Lakes, the Piedmont, Tuscany, Umbria & Rome

1 MAY – 23 MAY 2017

Code: 21706

Tour Leaders **John Patrick**

Physical Ratings 

Enjoy Italy's famous gardens in the Northern Lakes District, Piedmont, Tuscany, Umbria & Rome, & private masterpieces by Paolo Pejrone, Russell Page, Paolo Portoghesi and Pearson & Barfoot.

Overview

Tour Highlights

- Join John Patrick, horticulturalist, garden designer and presenter on ABC TV's *Gardening Australia*, to tour the gardens of five distinct regions of Italy.
- Enjoy the magic of [northern lakeside and island gardens](#) including Villa Carlotta, Villa del Balbianello, Isola Bella and Isola Madre.
- Meet Paolo Pejrone, currently Italy's leading garden designer, and view his own garden 'Bramafam', the estate of the Peyrani family and, by special appointment, the private Agnelli Gardens at Villar Perosa - one of Italy's most splendid examples of garden design.
- Tour through the Piedmont exploring the great estates of the House of Savoy including the Castello di Masino.
- View the work of Russell Page with visits to the private gardens of San Liberato and Villa Silvio Pellico.
- Visit intimate urban gardens in Florence and Fiesole including Villa di Maiano, the secret gardens of Villa Capponi, and the Giardini Corsini al Prato.
- Ramble through the historical centres of lovely old cities like Turin, Lucca, Siena, Florence and Perugia.
- Encounter masterpieces of Italian art in major churches and museums.
- Enjoy delicious meals in the verdant surrounds of a number of private Tuscan and Umbrian villas including Villa di Geggiano, Villa Vignamaggio (featured in Kenneth Branagh's film *Much Ado About Nothing*) and Villa Aureli.
- Explore the great Renaissance garden designs at Villa La Foce, home of Iris Origo, author of the famous *Merchant of Prato*, and Villa Gamberaia at Settignano, described by Edith Wharton in her book *Italian Villas and Their Gardens* (1904).
- Marvel at the meeting of culture and nature in Paolo Portoghesi's stunning gardens at Calcata.
- Appreciate historic masterpieces like Villa Lante and Villa d'Este, Tivoli, and the [Giardini di Ninfa](#).
- Discover the 'rose regions' of Umbria and Lazio with visits to Palazzo Patrizi and San Liberato.
- Visit the private gardens of Torrecchia with designs by [Dan Pearson](#) and [Stuart Barfoot](#), considered "one of Italy's most beautiful private gardens".

23 days in Italy

Overnight Moltrasio (2 nights) • Stresa (2 nights) • Turin (4 nights) • Lucca (2 nights) • Florence (4 nights) • Siena (2 nights) • Perugia (1 night) • Viterbo (1 night) • Rome (4 nights).

Overview

Join John Patrick, horticulturalist, garden designer and presenter on ABC TV's *Gardening Australia*, to explore the unique gardens of the Northern Lakes, Piedmont, Tuscany, Umbria and Lazio. This tour features exclusive visits to private gardens opened especially for ASA. Few travellers will ever enjoy the famous English landscape designer Russell Page's gardens at Villa Silvio Pellico, or the designs by Dan Pearson and Stuart Barfoot at Torrecchia Vecchia. We accompany Paolo Pejrone, a pupil of Russell Page and currently Italy's leading garden designer, on visits to his own garden 'Bramafam', on our visit to the gardens of Casa Agnelli, and to the estate of the Peyrani family. These special experiences augment a program exploring historic gardens that highlight continuity and change in Italian gardening tradition. Along with the magical northern lakeside and island gardens of Villa Carlotta, Villa del Balbianello, Isola Bella and Isola Madre we visit the Piedmontese Castello di Masino; Tuscan Renaissance and Baroque masterpieces like Villa La Foce, home of Iris Origo, author of the famous *Merchant of Prato*; the Borromini-inspired garden of renowned

architect and scholar Paolo Portoghesi at Calcata; and the unforgettable Giardini di Ninfa south of Rome. Outside Florence we view the ingenious garden design of Englishman Cecil Pinsent, at Villa Capponi - a perfect example of a 'secret' enclosed parterre garden where the late Queen Mother enjoyed holidays as a girl. Lazio's Palazzo Patrizi at Castel Giuliano will delight rose lovers while San Liberato provides another example of Russell Page's work. Throughout our journey we explore how Italians have for centuries exploited panoramic parterres, glistening lake settings, exquisite villa architecture and garden sculpture, fountains and water cascades to produce sublime gardens. We also enjoy Italy's loveliest landscapes including the stunning Ligurian coast, beautiful old cities such as Turin, Florence, Lucca, Siena, Perugia and Rome and feast on local cuisine at Villas Geggiano, Vignamaggio and Aureli.

Leaders



John Patrick

Garden designer, prolific author, radio and TV presenter for ABC's 'Gardening Australia'. John founded the Australian Open Garden Scheme. He initiated ASA's garden tours and has led over 20 tours to Europe, Asia & the USA since 2003.

John Patrick will be familiar to many for his work on radio and television presenting programs relating to gardens, their plants and their history. He is currently a presenter on ABC's television series *Gardening Australia*. John has also written extensively on gardens throughout the world, including articles in *Vogue Living* and *The Australian Garden Journal*. He has written thirteen books as widely diverse as *Trees for Town and City Gardens* and *A Brief Biography of Robert Sweet*. John has lectured widely in Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand and has worked as a judge and consultant to garden shows and events. In 1985 he organised the opening of gardens for Victoria's Sesquicentenary which led to his involvement in the founding of what is now Australia's Open Garden Scheme. His knowledge of European History allows him to place Garden History in a special context, one that reflects the social milieu in which gardens were created. His encyclopaedic knowledge of plants will give garden visits a special appeal and permit a greater appreciation of the particular environment and conditions of the garden. John has travelled led ASA tours to New Zealand, the USA, South Africa, China, Japan, Bhutan, Spain, Portugal, Italy, France and Britain. He has independently visited gardens in Morocco. He is an enthusiastic traveller with a special interest in the food and culture of countries he visits.

Combine this tour with

Natural Landscapes & Gardens of the Channel Islands: Jersey, Guernsey, Herm, Burhou & Sark

26 MAY – 8 JUN 2017



Itinerary

The following itinerary describes a range of gardens, villas and palaces which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but others require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure in 2017. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight schedules and confirmation of private visits. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & evening meals indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=evening meals.

Moltrasio - 2 nights

Day 1: Monday 1 May, Arrive Milan – Transfer to Moltrasio

- Afternoon at Leisure
- Introductory Meeting
- Welcome Evening Meal at Gourmet Restaurant Imperialino

On arrival at Milan's Malpensa airport, those taking the ASA 'designated' flight transfer by private coach to Moltrasio. If you are travelling independently, you should meet the group at the [Grand Hotel Imperiale](#). Note: private transfers from the airport to the hotel can be arranged through the hotel's concierge, please contact ASA for further information.

The afternoon is at leisure to relax on the shores of Lake Como with panoramic views of the Grigne Mountains. In the evening we will have a short introductory meeting before dining at the hotel's restaurant. (Overnight Moltrasio) D

Day 2: Tuesday 2 May, Moltrasio – Tremezzo – Bellagio – Moltrasio

- Villa Carlotta, Tremezzo

- Villa Melzi, Bellagio (optional)
- Villa del Balbianello, Bellagio

This morning we cruise across Lake Como to 18th century Villa Carlotta, a garden with a huge botanical collection and a traditional Italian formal design, unlike most lake gardens that were heavily influenced by the more fluid layouts of English landscape gardening; it thus has a wide variety of architectural features – parterres, stairways, ponds, fountains, etc. In April and May Villa Carlotta offers a sea of multi-coloured azaleas shaped in high rounded cushions alongside the garden paths.

During the lunch break you will have some time at leisure to visit Villa Melzi (optional).

Afternoon visit to Villa del Balbianello, an exquisite villa set in woods of pine, soaring cypress and oak with pollarded plane trees and manicured lawns and flowerbeds. Facing the promontory of Serbelloni, from the Lavedo point it boasts unparalleled views down the three branches of the lake. The first villa was built in 1540, but was later moved to a new site inland to protect it from flooding. Cardinal Durini erected a casino with a loggia in 1790, open to the sun and breezes; today it is trellised with *Ficus pumila* (creeping fig) and flanked by a library and music room. (Overnight Moltrasio) B

Stresa - 2 nights

Day 3: Wednesday 3 May, Moltrasio – Bisuschio – Casalzuigno – Stresa

- Villa Cicogna Mozzoni, Bisuschio
- Villa della Porta Bozzolo, Casalzuigno

Depart Moltrasio to visit Villa Cicogna Mozzoni, located on a steep hillside in the village of Bisuschio. Its garden looks out upon sweeping views, with a glimpse of Lake Lugano. Founded in the 15th century, the villa took its present form in the 16th century. The Cicogna family, who inherited it in 1580, still owns this lovely villa. The formal gardens rise on 7 narrow terraces and adjacent to them is a small sunken garden with formal box parterres and patches of lawn. We tour the villa residence that houses a fine antique collection. Above the villa is a great terrace with Renaissance grottoes offering shade in summer, and a magnificent water stair. Flowing water was an essential feature of Italian formal gardens, offering a cooling spectacle and a lively, burbling sound.

After lunchtime at leisure we visit Villa della Porta Bozzolo, which is unusual for Lombardy because its measured stately design is laid out upon a steep slope. Parterres, terraces with stone balustrades and grand stairways flanking fountains rise to an octagonal clearing, or theatre, surrounded by a thick ring of cypresses and woods. The perspective rises further to the villa, set to one side in order not to interrupt the silvan view. We continue to our hotel located on the shores of Lake Maggiore. (Overnight Stresa) B

Day 4: Thursday 4 May, Stresa – Lake Maggiore – Lake Orta – Stresa

- Isola Bella, Lake Maggiore
- Isola Madre, Lake Maggiore
- Orta San Giulio & Isola San Giulio, Lake Orta

We take the ferry across Lake Maggiore to Count Carlo Borromeo's Isola Bella (1632), one of Italy's most extraordinary Baroque gardens. Located on an island off Stresa, it appears to float like a palatial barge, with 10 terraces rising like a ship's prow from the reflecting waters. It shares the island with the Borromeo palace and its adjacent village.

We also visit Isola Madre, with semi-tropical plantings amongst which white peacocks roam. In 1845, Flaubert wrote that 'Isola Madre is the most sensual place that I have ever seen in the world'. It has a fine swamp cypress, citrus fruit trees, crape myrtle, hibiscus, leptospermum and acacias. The landscape woods have groves of native trees – aromatic cypress, bay and pine – interplanted with camphor, pepper trees and styrax. Its pathways are lined with magnolias, camellias, rhododendrons and azaleas.

Afternoon visit to Lake Orta to the west of Lake Maggiore, a tiny jewel surrounded by hills and mountains acting as a great natural theatre enveloping local towns and villages. The most beautiful of these is Orta San Giulio, whose town hall has a frescoed façade. Its narrow streets are lined with Rococo houses. We take a ferry to San Giulio Island to visit the 12th century Romanesque church whose pulpit is one of the outstanding masterpieces of medieval sculpture in Northern Italy. (Overnight Stresa) B

Turin - 4 nights

Day 5: Friday 5 May, Stresa – Caravino – Turin

- Castello di Masino including lunch and 'The Cloud Garden' by Paolo Pejrone, Caravino

We drive south from Stresa to the Castello di Masino to tour the castle and its monumental park. This great Savoyard property 'sets the scene' for your exploration of Piedmont, one of Italy's lesser known, yet extremely important regions. Nestling at the foot of the Alps, this 'gateway to Western Europe' absorbed many foreign garden influences, particularly from nearby France, and from the United Kingdom. In 1860 the venerable House of Savoy, founded in the 11th century, gave a newly unified Italy its royal family. From the 17th century the Dukes of Savoy had built grand palaces and vast gardens often influenced by those of the French *Ancien Régime*. Our tour of the interior of Castello di Masino and then of its grand park introduces not only Savoyard culture but also contemporary developments in Italian gardening. A captivating aspect of the park is the *Giardino delle Nuvole* (the Cloud Garden) designed by one of Italy's foremost garden designers, the internationally renowned Paolo Pejrone, founder of the Piedmontese Garden Academy. Inspired by Russell Page and Roberto Burle Marx, Pejrone has designed gardens in Germany, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Austria, France and the United Kingdom. Pejrone is a committee member of FAI (Fondazione Ambiente Italiana), dedicated to the restoration and conservation of Savoyard castles and palaces; it is headquartered at Castello di Masino. The Castle also hosts an extremely important garden festival in May. After lunch we will make our way to Turin, Italy's first capital city after unification and home to the House of Savoy. (Overnight Turin) BL

Day 6: Saturday 6 May, Turin

- Orientation walk of Turin, including guided visits to the Palazzo Reale (Royal Palace) and Palazzo Madama
- Afternoon and evening at leisure

This morning we will enjoy a guided orientation walk of the city's centre with a local guide. Our walk will include a visit to Turin's Royal Palace, seat of the House of Savoy (1646-1859) and of Vittorio Emanuele II, King of Italy (1860-1865). This grand palace, a major essay in Italian Baroque and Rococo, has sumptuous decorations and furniture from all periods. We will also visit Turin's Palazzo Madama, a medieval castle behind a Baroque façade, with a major art collection that includes Antonello da Messina's *Portrait of a Man*. The afternoon and evening we will be at leisure to explore Turin in greater depth. (Overnight Turin) B

Day 7: Sunday 7 May, Turin – Moncalieri – Turin

- Villa Silvio Pellico – including lunch (exclusive private visit)
- Private Garden Visit (to be confirmed)

Today we visit Villa Silvio Pellico, a fine Neo-Gothic mansion (1870) with a Russell Page garden, arguably one of his three masterpieces. Page had gained an understanding of the Italian and French formal tradition of gardening from Edith Wharton and Geoffrey Jellicoe. On an ill-kempt hillside in the 1950s he created a fine terraced garden on two axes divided by pools; Page was particularly sensitive to the use of water in gardens. Symmetrical hedges create a series of 'rooms' of different designs, using diverse vegetation and ground patterns, as well as sculptures. The present owner, Raimonda Lanza di Trabia, daughter of the last Prince of Trabia (Sicily), and her husband Emanuele Gamna, will host us for lunch. You can read more about this garden in Marina Schinz & Gabrielle van Zuylen's book *The Gardens of Russell Page*.

We continue our afternoon with another private garden visit (details to be confirmed). (Overnight Turin) BL

Day 8: Monday 8 May, Turin – Villar Perosa – Revello – Moncalieri – Turin

- Program hosted by Paolo Pejrone
- Gardens of Casa Agnelli at Villar Perosa (exclusive private visit)
- Bramafam, Paolo Pejrone's Private Experimental Garden (exclusive private visit)
- Private Garden of Silvana and Alberto Peyrani (exclusive private visit to be confirmed in 2017)

We are particularly privileged today to accompany Paolo Pejrone on a visit to his own, very private garden, designed not so much for its aesthetics as a laboratory in which the master is constantly experimenting with new plantings. Set on a steep escarpment near a ruined medieval rampart from which 'Bramafam' takes its name, the garden and its owner's discussions with you will give precious, unique insights into his ideas and practice.

Paolo Pejrone will also accompany us to the exquisite gardens of Casa Agnelli, set on a private estate which has been home to the Agnelli family since the early 1800s. The grounds offer a range of styles: Italianate formal gardens; a water garden with interconnecting lakes; an English-style woodland walk, a romantic garden, sculpture gardens and more. We are particularly fortunate to have been granted a visit to this most extraordinary of gardens.

Today Paolo Pejrone will also introduce the private garden he designed for Silvana and Alberto Peyrani. Pejrone surrounded their villa with extensive new gardens, including decorative orchards and a fine potager. We are very grateful that the Peyranis have graciously consented to allow us to explore their private domain with its creator. (Overnight Turin) B

Lucca - 2 nights

Day 9: Tuesday 9 May, Turin – Santa Margherita Ligure – La Cervara – Lucca

- The Abbey of San Girolamo al Monte di Portofino (La Cervara)
- Group Evening meal at Gli Orti di Via Elisa Restaurant

We drive southeast along the grand Ligurian coast to the magnificent Abbey of San Girolamo al Monte di Portofino. Located in a strategic position atop a rocky headland that overlooks the Tigullio Gulf, it was founded as a Benedictine Monastery (1361). The monks' former vegetable garden was transformed into what is now the only monumental Italian formal garden in the Liguria region. It extends over two levels connected by arbors and steps. On the lower level, hedges of boxwood (*buxus sempervirens*) are trimmed

into ornate stepped cones, an important example of topiary art. The hedges surround a 17th-century marble fountain in the form of a *putto*, whose underlying basin is tinged with pink water lilies in summer.

After visiting this grand garden, we continue to Lucca and check in to the Hotel Ilaria, which occupies the restored stables of the Villa Bottini inside the city walls. In the evening we dine together at Gli Orti di Via Elisa Restaurant located near the hotel. **(Overnight Lucca) BD**

Day 10: Wednesday 10 May, Lucca

- Orientation tour of Lucca incl. Cathedral of San Martino, San Michele, San Frediano and the Piazza del Mercato
- Palazzo Pfanner
- Afternoon at leisure: Optional Walk along Lucca's City Walls
- Evening Puccini Concert, Church of San Giovanni

Lucca is one of the most beautiful of all Italian cities, with city walls graced by grand plantations of trees and one of the finest sets of Romanesque churches in Italy. We visit the Cathedral of St. Martin, with a lovely Jacopo della Quercia tomb. The Church of San Michele has a spectacular façade made up of complex blind galleries with capricious sculptures of beasts. It was built in the ancient forum of the city; Lucca's medieval street plan follows the original Roman plan. The oval Piazza del Mercato's medieval palaces were built into the structure of Lucca's Roman amphitheatre. San Frediano, meanwhile, has a distinctive façade mosaic and a unique baptismal font that was once a medieval fountain.

After lunch we visit the privately owned 17th century Palazzo Pfanner where parts of *Portrait of a Lady* were filmed (1996). The palace's owner, Dario Pfanner, will introduce his palace and its Baroque garden, a fine example of an urban garden that includes various statues of Olympian deities and a fountain pond. Its elegant lemon house (*limonaia*) inflects a space defined by boxwood and laurel hedges. Bushes of peonies and hortensias, roses and potted geraniums gain shade from yews, pines, magnolias and an old camellia. Inside, the palace's *piano nobile* (main reception room) features Pietro Paolo Scorsini frescoes (c.1720).

The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. You may wish to walk a section of Lucca's 17th-century city walls, the best preserved in Italy. The Lucchesi planted trees atop these walls to form a promenade enlivened by small gardens and lawns. We attend an evening concert with a selection from operas (e.g. *La Bohème*, *Tosca*, *Madame Butterfly* and *Turandot*) by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) a native of Lucca, in the Church of San Giovanni. **(Overnight Lucca) B**

Florence - 4 nights

Day 11: Thursday 11 May, Lucca – Camigliano – Capannori – San Piero a Sieve – Florence

- Villa Torrigiani, Camigliano
- Lunch at a typical Tuscan *osteria*
- Medici Castello del Trebbio, San Piero a Sieve

During the Renaissance, the wealthy merchant families of Tuscany built grand villas on the plains of Lucca. We visit 17th-century Villa Torrigiani, named after the camellia that was introduced to the gardens in the early 18th century. The garden's Baroque layout, attributed to André Le Nôtre, features symmetrical reflecting pools in front of the villa. Most outstanding is the secret garden (Giardino di Flora), with regular beds, topiary and pools. The garden features 19th-century trees, magnificent magnolias, cypresses and umbrella pines. The 18th-century avenue of cypresses leading to the villa from the village of Borgonuova

reflects the past grandeur of estates in this region.

We eat a traditional Tuscan lunch at a nearby *osteria* before continuing our journey westward toward Castello il Trebbio in San Piero a Sieve.

“Set on a hilltop in the Apennines north of Florence, a few kilometres west of San Piero a Sieve, Castello del Trebbio is one of the oldest villas built by the Medici, who came from the Mugello and chose their native region for their first villas. The head of the Medici clan, Giovanni di Bicci, owned the property from the late 14th century, and upon his death in 1428, the villa was inherited by Cosimo the Elder, who commissioned Michelozzo di Bartolomeo to rebuild the original castle.

“Set in an excellent strategic position, dominating the Sieve Valley below and near a cross roads (Trebbio derives from the Latin *trivium*), the castle was surrounded by woods and a huge estate which bordered on the Cafaggiolo property. Although Vasari suggests otherwise, Trebbio was the first of the Mugello castles to be rebuilt by Michelozzo. Immediately after 1428, the building work began, incorporating the existing watchtower into a solid, compact defensive construction surrounded by a moat and drawbridge. The defensive role was necessary on account of the castle’s position, however novel features were also introduced to satisfy the requirements of the patron.

The walled garden set on two terraces to the right is noteworthy as it was among the first of its kind to be designed for a villa. The upper terrace of the well-preserved garden, a veritable *hortus conclusus*, is decorated with a long pergola made up of a double row of columns and sandstone capitals in various styles (ionic and decorated with foliage motifs), which support a thick covering of vines. As can be seen in the lunette painted by Giusto Utens between 1599 and 1602, there was a second pergola (now lost) on the lower terrace, which retains the original layout of a vegetable garden with a pond, as well as planting designed by Michelozzo to satisfy not only defensive requirements, but also Cosimo’s spiritual desire for a contemplative life.” (*The Medici Villas: Complete Guide* by Isabella Lapi Ballerini & Mario Scalini).

In the late afternoon we arrive at our hotel in central Florence. (Overnight Florence) BL

Day 12: Friday 12 May, Florence – Fiesole – Florence

- Villa Medici in Fiesole
- Guided Tour, Villa di Maiano
- Lunch at Fattoria di Maiano
- Villa Capponi

Unlike the grand villa gardens we have visited near Lucca, Florence and its vicinity have a number of small intimate urban gardens that we visit today. Many of these offer glimpses of the city, a counterpart to the spectacular views afforded by their grander Florentine counterparts. Such views offer a reminder that Florentine villas were seen as retreats from this metropolitan powerhouse. We make an early morning visit to elegant Fiesole in the hills overlooking Florence where Boccaccio set his *Decameron*, model for Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*; Boccaccio’s protagonists told stories to while away their days in a Fiesole villa in which they had escaped from the plague ravaging Florence.

We first visit the garden of 16th-century Villa Medici in Fiesole. The garden, showing Cecil Pinsent’s influence, is divided into three terraces with a *limonaia*. We shall then transfer by coach to nearby Villa di Maiano.

Among Villa di Maiano’s past owners are members of the famous Sforza and Pazzi families. However, it was

wealthy Englishman Sir John Temple Leader who, after acquiring the property in 1844, renovated the villa, its gardens and the surrounding structures. Architect Felice Francolini, while in some respects keeping with the villa's 15th century appearance, made some radical changes, such as the addition of a Gothic-style keep with a loggia. The garden in front of the villa features a well, a gazebo, and the Neo-Gothic *loggetta* with a swimming pool. The lower terrace's large garden is bordered by boxwood hedges and the north side below the upper terrace has a *limonaia*. The northern part of the garden is a landscaped park designed by Giuseppe Francelli and Alessandro Papini, an expert in hydraulics and landscape architect.

After Temple Leader's death, Villa di Maiano and the surrounding property was bought, in 1917, by Florentine surgeon Teodoro Stori, who was married to a member of the noble Principi Corsini family. Their adopted daughter Lucrezia Corsini, with her husband Count Giacomo Miari Fulcis, continued restorations and work on the Villa and the Fattoria. Countess Lucrezia Corsini, the Villa's present owner, has specialised the Fattoria di Maiano in the organic cultivation of olives. We will take a guided tour of the Villa and Gardens, as well making a brief visit to the as the Olive Mill. We shall then enjoy lunch together at the Fattoria di Maiano's restaurant.

The Villa di Maiano can count Queen Victoria among its guests; it has also provided the set for numerous films, including James Ivory's *A Room with a View* and Franco Zeffirelli's *Tea with Mussolini*.

In Florence in the afternoon we visit the 16th-century Villa Capponi and its secret gardens where the late Queen Mother spent holidays as a girl. Cecil Pinsent's influence is evident; he added a library and created a hidden swimming pool area. (Overnight Florence) B

Day 13: Saturday 13 May, Florence – Greve in Chianti – Florence

- Giardino Corsini al Prato
- Villa Vignamaggio, Greve in Chianti – including wine-tasting and lunch

We begin with a visit to the Giardini Corsini al Prato, a Florentine urban garden that illustrates the deep connection between nature, science and beauty in the Renaissance sensibility. Alessandro Acciaioli, a passionate 16th-century botanist, conceived the garden. Unable to finish his residence, he was forced to sell the property to Filippo di Lorenzo Corsini who completed the Italian garden that remains unchanged to this day. Completely concealed from the street by the façade of the palazzo, this urban garden reveals pink and red rock roses, peonies, cherry trees and lavender along with elegant lemon urns and a central axis of solemn marble statues. After our tour of the gardens Princess Georgiana Corsini has kindly arranged for us a tour of her palace, followed by refreshments.

We next drive out of Florence for a delicious lunch at a beautiful Renaissance villa, Vignamaggio, Greve in Chianti. The 15th-16th-century house has important artistic associations, for Leonardo da Vinci is thought to have stayed here, and painted the owner's young wife, Lisa del Giocondo, Mona Lisa. Vignamaggio is also famed for its wines, for it is the official supplier to the Italian parliament at the Quirinale Palace, Rome; its wines are first mentioned in documents dating from the 15th century. It also was the setting of Kenneth Branagh's film *Much Ado About Nothing*, starring Emma Thompson. The restored garden, aligned to a row of 100-year-old cypress, features simple topiary and box hedging amid lawns. Areas like the sunken fountain garden inflect this exquisite orchestration of trees, hedges, lawns and old statues that look out upon the estate's famous vineyards.

In the afternoon we return to Florence, where the evening is at leisure. (Overnight Florence) BL

Day 14: Sunday 14 May, Florence

- San Lorenzo: Medici Chapel
- Palazzo Medici Riccardi: The Chapel of the Magi
- Afternoon at leisure

On a visit to San Lorenzo and the Medici Chapel we explore Michelangelo's Medici tombs, masterpieces of 16th-century sculpture showing a transition from classical High Renaissance values to a Mannerist mode.

Near San Lorenzo we visit the Palazzo Medici Riccardi to view Benozzo Gozzoli's frescoes of the *Procession of the Magi* in the small Magi Chapel. The sumptuous procession, which includes Medici family members, is set in an ideal Tuscan landscape, which forms a fascinating comparison to the gardens we visit and countryside through which we drive. The afternoon is at leisure to explore Florence's many monuments and museums. (Overnight Florence) B

Siena - 2 nights

Day 15: Monday 15 May, Florence – Settignano – Pianella – Siena

- Villa Gamberaia, Settignano – including interiors of the villa
- Villa di Geggiano, Pianella – including buffet lunch (exclusive private visit)
- Optional evening excursion to Siena's town centre

We drive to Siena via two famous Tuscan villas. At Settignano we visit the Villa Gamberaia, with arguably the most famous of Florentine villa gardens. The Capponi family initiated the present garden in 1718. In 1896, Princess Ghika of Serbia created the main water parterres in front of the villa. The Marchi family has recently restored the garden. It features magnificent topiary, two fine grottoes, and wonderful old cypresses and pines. By special arrangement, we also tour the interiors of the villa which combines interesting architectural features of both an urban palazzo and suburban villa.

Midday we cross to the opposite side of the Sienese hills to the enchanting Villa Geggiano. Here, centuries-old cypress, potted lemons and clipped box hedges adorn a garden boasting a unique 'greenery theatre', late Baroque sculptures, a kitchen garden with topiary art and a semi-circular fishpond that forms an elegant terrace overlooking Siena. The villa itself contains original 13th-century furnishings. A small chapel faces the garden. Lunch features *crostini* with porcini mushrooms and truffles, pasta, various locally cured meats and Pecorino cheeses, followed by plum jam tart, all washed down with Villa di Geggiano *Chianti Classico*, mineral water and coffee.

In the afternoon we continue to our hotel on the outskirts of Siena, a villa surrounded by gardens. For those wishing to dine in Siena, there will be an optional evening excursion into the city centre. (Overnight Siena) BL

Day 16: Tuesday 16 May, Siena

- Orientation tour of Siena including: Palazzo Pubblico, Cathedral & Museum
- Afternoon at leisure

Siena is the quintessential medieval city. We explore Lorenzetti's fascinating paintings of *Good and Bad Government* in the Palazzo Pubblico and Duccio's masterpiece, the *Maestà* in the Cathedral Museum. We examine Nicola and Giovanni Pisano's great pulpit in Siena Cathedral. We also visit medieval quarters (*contrade*) dominated by palaces still occupied by the families who built them. The *contrade* compete in the famous *palio* horse race twice a year. Protected by the Virgin Mary, Siena is a city of Trinitarian symbolism.

Built on three ridges, it has three major sectors (*terzi*) that each elected three members of the city council, and interpreted its very architectural fabric in such symbolic terms. The afternoon is at leisure to explore Siena's many monuments and museums. (Overnight Siena) B

Perugia - 1 night

Day 17: Wednesday 17 May, Siena – Chianciano Terme – Castel del Piano Umbro – Perugia

- Villa La Foce, Chianciano Terme (by special appointment to be confirmed in 2017)
- Private gardens of Villa Aureli, Castel del Piano Umbro – including lunch
- Perugia Orientation Walk: Cathedral & Fontana Maggiore

We drive south to the Renaissance Villa La Foce, home of Iris Origo, author of the famous *Merchant of Prato*. Origo's two autobiographies, *Images and Shadows* and *War in Val d'Orcia*, vividly describe life on the estate in the mid-20th century. La Foce overlooks the Orcia valley and Amiata Mountains, maintaining a distinctive harmony between its spectacular landscape setting and the formal style of surrounding gardens. Terraces with cherries, pines, cypress and wild herbs gently climb its hillside setting. Now a centre for cultural and artistic activities, it hosts the distinguished Incontri chamber annual summer music festival in the Castelluccio, a medieval castle on the property.

Count Sperello di Serego Alighieri, a descendent of Dante, will host us for a light lunch and show us his lovely Villa Aureli. Shaded by lime trees and oaks and decorated with many late antique vases containing citrus trees, the villa dates to the middle of the 18th century, when a Perugian nobleman and artist, Count Sperello Aureli, transformed a 16th-century tower into his country residence. Of particular note is the orangery, whose high roof is reminiscent of the hull of an upturned ship.

We continue to Perugia for a gentle orientation walk to include its Cathedral and Fontana Maggiore. We spend two nights in the luxury Hotel Brufani Palace, located on a hilltop within Perugia's historic core. (Overnight Perugia) BL

Viterbo - 1 night

Day 18: Thursday 18 May, Perugia – Bagnaia – Viterbo

- Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria
- Villa Lante, Bagnaia

We begin by viewing masterpieces, including works by Perugino, in the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria before departing Perugia to visit the great Villa Lante and its garden. Villa Lante is the consummate example of Italian Mannerist garden design. Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola's exemplary essay in fine scale and proportion centres on a fountain and water parterre. Vignola was influenced by the Vatican gardens, the Villa d'Este, Hadrian's marine theatre and the Boboli Gardens (Florence). Its theme, humanity's descent from the Golden Age is based upon Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. Water flows from the Grotto of the Deluge at the summit down a stepped cascade and through a channel at the centre of a vast stone table used for banquets, inspired by Pliny's description of an imperial garden table using water to cool wine and fruit. In the late afternoon drive a short distance to our hotel located in the countryside outside Viterbo. (Overnight Viterbo) BD

Rome - 4 nights

Day 19: Friday 19 May, Viterbo – Vignanello – Calcata – Rome

- Castello Ruspoli, Vignanello – including lunch at Cantina degli Artisti
- Gardens of Paolo Portoghesi at Calcata

Castello Ruspoli occupies the site of a mid-9th century Benedictine convent later converted to a military stronghold. Ortensia Baglioni transformed it into a villa, designed by the great architects Sangallo and Vignola, and succeeding generations created one of Italy's most beautiful parterres, composed of hedges of bay, laurel and box, which articulate a vast rectangular space. The Princess Ruspoli today maintains the gardens. Our visit will be complemented by lunch in the wine-cellars near the palazzo, which specialise in the cuisine of Vignanello.

This afternoon we visit the gardens of distinguished architect and scholar Paolo Portoghesi. The gardens reinterpret Baroque elements and Borrominian forms, and fuse geometry with nature to produce a garden which is both spectacularly modern and at the same time, reverent toward the traditions upon which it draws. (Overnight Rome) BL

Day 20: Saturday 20 May, Rome – Ninfa – Cisterna – Rome

- Giardini di Ninfa
- Private Gardens of Torrecchia Vecchia

We depart this morning at approximately 8.00 am for the Giardini di Ninfa. The magnificent gardens of Ninfa, south of Rome, are some of the most remarkable in all of Italy. Today, their gates will open for a special private visit for our group. The town of Ninfa is but a memory of a once prosperous medieval commune owned by the Caetani family since the mid-13th century. In the early 20th century the family began to regenerate its ruins, taking advantage of a microclimate greened by rich spring water. Thousands of species were introduced from all over the world under the guidance of botanical experts. Lelia Caetani, the last of her ancient family, died in 1977 and bequeathed her property to the Foundation Caetani that maintains the wonderfully atmospheric gardens. Today plants weave themselves over ruined towers, ancient archways and churches, while ducks and swans glide on the castle's moat. Highlights include a walled garden, small orchard and diverse plantings in which roses, banana trees and maples thrive together in this unique and beautiful landscape.

Nearby, we enjoy a picnic lunch and visit the dreamy gardens of Torrecchia, one of Italy's most beautiful private gardens. Nestled against the crumbling ruins of a medieval village and castle, perched on a volcanic hilltop just south of Rome, they command spectacular views of the unspoilt 1500-acre estate'. Owned by Carlo Caracciolo (the late owner of the Italian newspaper *L'Espresso*) and Violante Visconti, the gardens were originally designed by Lauro Marchetti, the current curator of the Giardini di Ninfa, and further developed by the English garden designer Dan Pearson and later by Stuart Barfoot. (Overnight Rome) BL

Day 21: Sunday 21 May, Rome – Tivoli – Rome

- Villa d'Este, Tivoli
- Lunch at Ristorante Sibilla, Tivoli
- Time at leisure in Rome

Set among the hanging cliffs of the Valle Gaudente, the Villa d'Este and its surrounding gardens and waterworks has undergone a series of innovative extensions in layout and decoration, including those of Bernini in the late 17th century. This UNESCO world heritage site boasts an impressive concentration of nymphaea, grottoes and fountains, including the famous hydraulic Organ Fountain that still operates. The Villa d'Este's use of water and music became the definitive model for Mannerist and Baroque gardens

across Europe.

We remain in the town of Tivoli for lunch at Ristorante Sibilla, a famous restaurant specialising in regional dishes. Marble plaques on the walls list the members of royalty and other famous people who have come here to dine for more than 250 years. After lunch, we return to Rome to enjoy time at leisure. (Overnight Rome) BL

Day 22: Monday 22 May, Rome – Castel Giuliano – Bracciano – Rome

- Palazzo Patrizi, Castel Giuliano (exclusive private visit to be confirmed in 2017)
- Visit to the village of Bracciano, overlooking Lake Bracciano
- San Liberato Giardini Botanici, Bracciano (exclusive private visit to be confirmed in 2017)
- Farewell Group Meal

The estate of Castel Giuliano, surrounded by a beautiful century-old park, occupies the site of an Etruscan and Roman settlement at the foot of the Tolfa Mountains. The Patrizi family has owned it since 1546 and its present owners have restored its ancient buildings and park to their former splendour. On its wide, gently sloping turf terraces, pines, cluster oaks, and century-old Lebanon cedars tower above sweet-scented herbs and flower-laden bushes, contrasting unruly nature with human interventions. The park has numerous Etruscan tombs and ruins of Roman walls covered in ferns and lichen. Truly unique, is one of Italy's most important private rose gardens; in May it hosts the famous 'Feast of the Roses'. Climbing roses soften the austere lines of the ancient castle walls, which are surrounded by combinations of shrubbery and foxglove, myrtle and pale blue ceanothus.

Nearby, we visit the gardens of San Liberato, overlooking Lake Bracciano, designed by the famous English landscape designer Russell Page. Page assisted the Count and Countess Sanminiatielli to create San Liberato between 1965 and 1975. With panoramic views of the lake and surrounding countryside, chestnut woods, a formal rose garden, informal flower beds like small islands dotting the green lawns, and borders of silver and grey plants, the garden also has a modern version of the 'Orto dei Semplici', a late medieval physic garden of monastery pharmacies – situated next to the extraordinary church of San Liberato (c.1000 AD). (Overnight Rome) BL

Day 23: Tuesday 23 May, Depart Rome

- Airport transfer for participants departing on the ASA 'designated' flight

The tour ends in Rome. Participants travelling on the ASA 'designated' flight will transfer to the airport to take their flight home to Australia. Alternatively, you may wish to extend your stay in Italy. Please contact ASA if you require further assistance. B

Accommodation

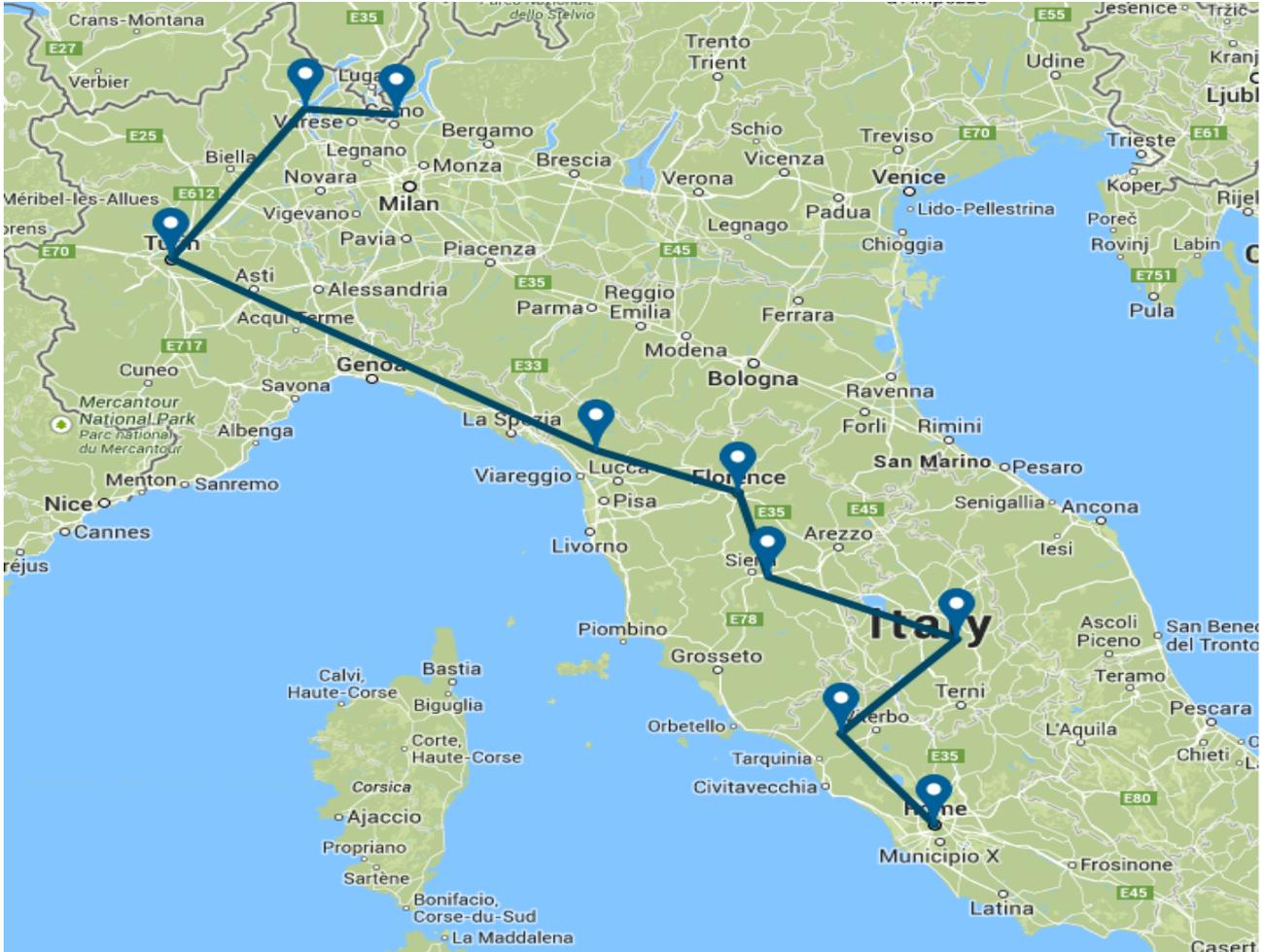
23 days in Italy

All hotels are rated 3, 4 or 5-star locally and are comfortable and conveniently situated. All rooms have shower or bath and W.C. Several hotels have swimming pools. Single rooms may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the single supplement. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

- Moltrasio (2 nights): 4-star Grand Hotel Imperiale - a charming hotel built in the late Art Nouveau style overlooking Lake Como and surrounded by private gardens. www.hotel-lago-como-imperiale.com
- Stresa (2 nights): 4-star Regina Palace Hotel - a charming hotel with a grand history, in the Stresa town centre close to many shops, restaurants, cafés. Regina Palace is situated directly across the road from the lake and enjoys magnificent views over Lake Maggiore. www.reginapalace.it/en
- Turin (4 nights): 4-star Townhouse 70 Hotel - a modern boutique hotel located in the heart of the historic centre. www.townhouse.it/th70/
- Lucca (2 nights): 4-star Hotel Ilaria - located within the walls of the old city, close to the cathedral. It is flanked by the centuries-old garden of the Villa Bottini - it occupies the villa's restored stables - and the medieval city gate, Porta San Gervasio. www.hotelilaria.com
- Florence (4 nights): 4-star Grand Hotel Adriatico - a modern hotel located between the Santa Maria Novella Square and the Arno River and within easy walking distance of all major monuments & museums. www.hoteladriatico.it
- Siena (2 nights): 4-star Hotel Garden - housed in a villa perched on a hill with vineyards and olive groves overlooking Siena. It stands majestically at the end of a beautiful park of ilex trees, flower beds and shrubs. www.gardenhotel.it
- Perugia (1 night): 5-star Hotel Brufani Palace - located on a hilltop within the historical centre of Perugia and walking distance from the main historical sites. www.brufanipalace.com
- Viterbo (1 night): 4-star Alla Corte delle Terme Exclusive Resort - a charming resort hotel located in the countryside out of Viterbo. www.allacortedelleterme.it
- Rome (4 nights): 3-star Albergo Santa Chiara - a charming hotel chosen for its location close to the Pantheon in the historic centre of Rome. www.albergosantachiara.com

Note: *hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only - Early-Bird Special: book before 30 Sep 2016

AUD \$TBA Land Content Only

AUD \$TBA Single Supplement

For competitive Economy, Business or First Class airfares and/or group airfares please contact ASA for further information.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 3 and 4-star hotels (5-star in Perugia)
- Breakfast daily, lunches and evening meals indicated in the tour itinerary, where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=evening meal
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach; ferry/boat excursions in the Lakes District
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour notes
- Light refreshments as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees
- Use of Audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Milan, Rome-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20 kg (44 lbs)
- Travel insurance



Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, six to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 23-day tour involves:

- Moderate walking and standing during site visits; walking tours may include steep slopes, flights of stairs, cobbled streets, visits to hill-top towns and uneven ground during garden visits
- Moderate travel by air-conditioned coach
- Visiting a range of towns and villages on foot, walks uphill from bus parks to historic town centres and other sites
- The use of audio headsets which amplify the voice of your guide (despite noisy surroundings). This technology also allows you to move freely during site visits without missing any information.
- 3 to 5-star hotels with eight hotel changes
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portage includes 1 piece of luggage per person.
- Excursions by ferry in the Northern Italian Lakes District

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether

this is a suitable tour for you.

Please note: it is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. For further information please refer to the ASA Reservation Application Form.

Practical Information

Prior to departure, tour members will receive practical notes which include information on visa requirements, health, photography, weather, clothing and what to pack, custom regulations, bank hours, currency regulations, electrical appliances and food. The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade website has advice for travellers see: www.smartraveller.gov.au

Booking Conditions

Making a Tentative Reservation before the tour price has been published

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD\$100.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD\$400.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of \$500.00 AUD is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$100.00 per person deposit, less a \$33.00 service fee (including GST).

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities without assistance or support:-

- walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains

- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Single Supplement

Payment of the single supplement will ensure accommodation in a single room throughout the tour. The number of single rooms available is extremely limited. People wishing to take the Single Supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.



Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME
TOUR DATES

Booking before the tour price is available

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OR

- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$100.00 per person deposit, less a \$33.00 service fee (including GST).

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr Mrs Ms Miss Dr Other

FIRST NAME Preferred FIRST NAME
MIDDLE NAME SURNAME

POSTAL ADDRESS

CITY STATE COUNTRY POSTCODE

TEL. (AH) () TEL. (BH) () Mobile Tel:

EMAIL address

Date of birth / / GENDER Male Female

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: a twin-bedded room a double-bedded room a room for sole occupancy
I am travelling: on my own with a friend/family member Travel Companion

Meals

I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

fish poultry red meat dairy products

eggs pork nuts

Other

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence Postal Mail Email Address

Participation Criteria

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- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature

Dated

Tour / Course Name

I have enclosed an Intention to Travel Fee of \$ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

Payment by (please indicate): Cheque Direct Debit (see below) Credit Card (see below)

By Cheque

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No.

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, American Express & Visa 1.95%

Please debit my: Mastercard American Express Visa

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number

Expiry Date

Security Code (CVC)

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ)

Cardholders Name

Cardholders Billing Address

State

Postcode

Country

Phone

Email

Cardholders Signature